(d) whether Government have identified some railway stations in Punjab State for their development as model stations;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (f) Model station scheme which was introduced to develop some of the stations as Models to other stations during 1986 has since been discontinued in 1992. Under this scheme, Jalandhar City was developed as model station in Punjab. However, provision of faciltities for passengers at railway station is a continuous process and the same is undertaken wherever warranted by traffic needs depending on the availability of funds. Accordingly various works have been taken up at Amritsar, Jalandhar City, Ludhiana, Beas, Firozpur Cantt., Bathinda and Jandiala.

Reduction in Waiting time for purchase of reservation trickets

1986. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be please to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up any plan to reduce the waiting time in large cities for the purchase of reservation tickets;

(b) whether it is a fact that it takes 2 to 3 hours to purchase tickets at railway stations in large cities;

(c) whether there is any proposal to have 24-hour reservation facilities in major cities; and

(d) if not, how does Government propose to reduce the time taken for buying tickets?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) During the peak seasons such as summer rush, pooja rush and christmas vacations waiting time in the large cities for purchasing tickets is considerably more. During other periods of the year, the waiting time varies from 20 to 40 minutes at the reservation counters.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Various steps taken by the railwasy for reducing the waiting time for purchasing tickets inter-alia include expansion of the computerised locations, opening of satellite reservation offices and provision of additional reservation/ booking counters.

Amenities at Chandigarh for Railways Passengers

1987. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be please to state:

(a) whether the Chandigarh Railway Passengers Welfare Association have written to the Prime Minister and Railway Minister seeking more facilities and amenities at Chandigarh for railway passengers;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of the demands are as under:—

(i) Conversion of Chandigarh Railway station into model, Modern and terminal Railway station.

(ii) Extension of August Kranti Express, Dakshin Express, Kerala Express, Karnataka Express and Tinsukia Express upto Chandigarh.

(iii) Introduction of direct train service for Bombay Central, Dadar, Manmad, Nanded, Goa, Pune and Patna Sahib from Chandigarh by attaching some coaches in different trains.

(iv) Electrification of New Delhi-Ambala-Chandigarh route.

(v) Provision of Return Journey facility through Computer terminal at Chandigarh Railway station and City Booking Office, Chandigarh.

(c) The details of action taken on the demands item-wise are as under:—

(i) Model station scheme which was introduced in 1986 has since been discontinued in 1992. Provision of amenities to passengers at stations is a continuous process and the same is undertaken wherever warrented by traffic needs depending on the availability of funds. Accordingly works of provisions of washable apron on platforms No. 1 and 4 and platform shelters on platforms No. 1, 2 and 3 have been taken up at a cost of Rs. 133.24 lakh. Coaching Terminal facilites are also being devleoped at a cost of Rs. 492.74 lakh.

(ii) and (iii) Extension of the trains upto Chandigarh or introduction of additional train services from Chandigarh is not feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

(iv) New Delhi to Ambala is already electrified. Electrification of Ambala-Chandigarh section has also been approved in the current year.

(v) At present Chandigarh is linked with the computerised passenger reservation centre of Delhi. A project has been undertaken for networking of the 5 computerised Passenger Reservation Systems of Calcutta, Mumbai, Madras, Delhi and Secunderabad, the software for which has been devleoped. Therefore, it would be feasible to link Chandigarh with the Calcutta, Mumbai, Chennai and Secunderabad Systems only after the networking system, after implementation, is tested thoroughly for its reliability and effectiveness.

Touts nabbed in Delhi

1988. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether touts nabbed in the recent drive in Delhi have been let off after paying a nominal fine; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to impose stringent action on touts nabbed and debar them from the ticketing business for at least 3 years?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) Touts who are anti-social/unscrupulous/unauthorised elements/persons operating in and around reservation offices/railway stations are apprehended and handed over to the Police for prosecution under Section 143 of the Railways' Act, 1989. As a result of the drives, 174 touts were apprehended in Delhi during the period April to June, 1997. The imposition of punishment i.e., imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years or fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees or both subject to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for one month or a fine of Rupees five thousand, as per law is the prerogative of the Judiciary.

Estimated cost of Radhanpur-Palanpur-Gandhidham-Bhuj Railway Line

1989. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated cost of completion of Radhanpur-Palanpur-Gandhidham-Bhuj broad-gauge railway line, sector-wise break-up;

(b) the funds earmarked by Government for above line, sector-wise;

(c) the reasons for granting the less amount for above line;

(d) by when the above line is likely to be completed?